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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4126  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLLECTIVE  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 001049

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: ON A MISSION, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER SEEKS NEW  
MALAYSIAN PEACE NEGOTIATOR

REF: A. MANILA 1002 (DAVAO OFFICIALS DENY VIGILANTE  
KILLINGS BUT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
BLAMES MAYOR)  
[1](#)B. MANILA 985 (ICRC HOSTAGE: 100 DAYS AND COUNTING)  
[1](#)C. 08 MANILA 2717 (AMBASSADOR ENGAGES EXECUTIVE  
SECRETARY ERMITA ON PEACE PROCESS)

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Larry L. Memmott,  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a private conversation with Ambassador May 11, Philippines National Security Agency Adviser Norberto Gonzales revealed that he was traveling to Kuala Lumpur to persuade Prime Minister Najib Razak to find a new chief negotiator for peace talks between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels in Mindanao. Ambassador emphasized that there needed to be movement in negotiations and, if replacing Othman was not palatable to the Malaysian side, suggested that the parties consider creating a small panel of three facilitators, to include more impartial and trustworthy individuals. Gonzales envisioned increased military activity on Jolo once the Red Cross hostage situation was resolved, and said he was worried about the growing kidnap-for-ransom phenomenon in Basilan. The Ambassador relayed her concern over Davao's vigilante killings, which Gonzales acknowledged was a serious problem that could no longer be ignored. END SUMMARY.

PHILIPPINES UNHAPPY WITH CHIEF MALAYSIAN NEGOTIATOR  
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[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador had an impromptu, discreet discussion May 11 in the VIP lounge at Manila's international airport with Philippines National Security Agency (NSA) Adviser Norberto Gonzales, who revealed he was traveling to Kuala Lumpur to persuade Prime Minister Najib Razak to appoint a new chief negotiator for peace talks between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Echoing sentiments from other Philippine officials over the past few months (ref C), Gonzales underscored the Philippine government's dissatisfaction with the performance of Malaysian chief negotiator Datu Othman, who was perceived as being partial to the MILF. Ambassador said there needed to be forward movement in negotiations, and she urged Gonzales to try to energize the Malaysians during his visit. If replacing Othman was not palatable to the Malaysian side, the Ambassador suggested, then the parties should consider creating a panel of facilitators to work alongside Othman, to include individuals that the Philippine side believed it could trust.

NEXT STEPS FOR JOLO AND BASILAN  
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[1](#)3. (C) Gonzales, joined by NSA Undersecretary Milo Ibrado, brother of the newly appointed Armed Forces chief, expressed concern about the unresolved Red Cross hostage situation in Jolo, but acknowledged that plans were underway to address the terrorist problem aggressively once the remaining hostage

was released. The Ambassador said that the U.S. would continue to provide assistance to the Philippine military to mitigate terrorism on Jolo and to support economic development projects. Turning to the situation in Basilan, Gonzales said he worried about the growing kidnap-for-ransom industry on that island, which was emboldened by the weak governance style of Governor Jum Akbar, whom Gonzales hoped to discourage from running for re-election in May 2010.

ADVISER ADMITS DAVAO KILLINGS ARE A PROBLEM  
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14. (C) The Ambassador called Gonzales' attention to the vigilante killings in Davao (ref A), noting she had met with Human Rights Watch about their recent report that blames the mayor and local officials for complicity in a policy that tolerates and even encourages the killings. She emphasized the U.S. government's extreme concern about the extent and nature of the killings and about local officials' tacit support for the denial of due process for petty criminals, who often are minors. Gonzales admitted the Davao killings were a problem, said that it was no longer possible for the local government to hide its involvement in the vigilante killings, and suggested, without explaining, that the situation in Davao might improve after the May 2010 elections.

Memmott